



## INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH SCIENCE & MANAGEMENT

### AN ANALYSIS ON THE EFFECTS OF UNIVERSITIES IN NORTHERN CYPRUS ON THE POPULATION BEARING CAPACITY: ECOLOGIC THEORY

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#### Abstract

Due to the lack of a scientific study about the rapid increase of universities in Northern Cyprus in the recent years, the conformity of the demographic structure of the country to the "Organizational Ecological Theory" has become a subject of discussion. This aspect has attracted considerable attention to both the academicians and the living population. Due to the lack of articles written on this subject, the rate of increase in the number of universities in North Cyprus has not been studied scientifically. In this study, Northern Cyprus road network, crimes committed in Northern Cyprus, total number of vehicles and country population were examined. In the light of the obtained data, the universities that opened rapidly in Northern Cyprus exceed the carrying capacity of the country. Besides, many solutions have been reached during the interviews with the academicians. All this information can be found in this article. As a method, this study was conducted as a qualitative study supported by historical analysis, secondary sources and interviews.

In conclusion, this study aimed to examine the increase of the universities in Northern Cyprus according to the "Organizational Ecological Theory" and to present the academic and administrative results of this study.

#### Introduction

As is known, Eastern Mediterranean Institute was the first university rendering services in 1979 in Northern Cyprus (MEB, 2016). The rapid increase on the population of the universities operating in Cyprus has started continuing with the establishment of Lefke European University in 1990. Above-mentioned universities have governmental relations (MEB, 2016).

The government changing its policies as "Neoliberal Policies" led Northern Cyprus to turn into a university island. The statements of governments on either "Cultural Resource Dependence" or "Populism and Nepotism" influenced the island's evolution from scientific studies to policies not adapting the demographic structure of the island. The population of universities in TRNC has rapidly increased to 15 since the 1990 until today. Moreover, it has been recorded that 14 more universities are awaiting approval for their launch. According to the 2015 – 2016 data, the number of students in Northern Cyprus between the mentioned years was 84,663. This number raised to 93,292 when the record of 2017 carried out by Ministry of Education are analyzed (MEB, Student numbers, 2017). The non-scientific approaches applied in the universities in TRNC caused a low quality education culture. This article is a study analyzing the universities' population bearing capacities with respect to the "Organizational Ecological Theory".

#### Design/methodology/approach

The present study comprises the following steps and approaches;

Analysis of the bearing capacity of the existing universities in Cyprus in line with the analysis of the collected data from such universities in Northern Cyprus.

#### Practical applications

The present study analyzes the bearing capacity of Northern Cyprus regarding the increasing population speed of universities.



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### Aim and method of the study

University sector in Northern Cyprus has been affected by the liberal politics since 1990's. The increasing number of the universities in TRNC has reached 15 since 2000's. In addition to this fact, approximately 15 more universities are pending for official approval to establish their services in TRNC. This situation is a threatening factor affecting the bearing capacity of the island. In this context, an analysis is conducted on the bearing capacity of existing universities in TRNC.

The aim of the present study is to reveal the overload on the bearing capacity of the country by conducting an investigation on the universities established since 2000 until today.

### Universities

The term "university" is originated from the Latin word "universitas". Universities survived until today from the European Medieval Ages, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. The term "university" used to refer the union of teachers and/or students (Subjective, 2006), means "corporation" in the most general way. This term is used as a synonym for the term "Statium Generale" in a contemporary sense during the Medieval Ages in Europe (Rukanıcı and Anameriç, 2004). This term, comprising the meaning of "universitas" has been used to refer universities in accordance with their positions for many years. "Universitas scholarium" has been used by the students whom established the Lonca, and the notion of "universitas magistrorum et scholarium" has been used by the teachers. According the information that will be provided below, total of 93,292 students have received training during 2016 and 2017 in TRNC. 52,135 of the mentioned students are citizens of Turkey, 27,538 of them are citizens of other international countries except Turkey and 13,619 are citizens of Northern Cyprus. 54,663 students studied in TRNC in the previous year. When it is compared with present numbers, an increase of 8,629 students can be observed. The number of students coming from Turkey increased to 52,135 from last year's number of 46,938. Moreover, the number of students from third countries has also shown an increase, from 23,917 to 27,538 (TRNC, Ministry of Education, 2017).

### Organizational ecology

The article entitled "The Population Ecology of Organizations" written by Michael Hannan and John Freeman after the second half of 1970's and Aldrich's (1979) studies laid the foundations of the organizational ecology approach. This approach that arose as a basic criticism (alternative) to organization oriented understanding and research programs, is also referred as "Organization Ecology", "Organizational Ecology", "Organizational Population-Ecology Approach" and "Natural Selection Approach".

Environment is put to forefront in Organizational Ecology Theory and environmental choice is emphasized rather than the organization's adaptation the environment. Organizations *evolve* just like living organisms. Evolution plays a vital role on the understanding of organizational ecology and the notion of adaptation takes part in its basis. The notion of adaptation in question here is, the evolution of organisms by changing their forms, functions or behaviors in reaction to the changing environment so that they can adapt the new conditions caused by the environmental changes.

It has been argued that the organisms firstly show variations in order to survive during the evolution process, then the ones whom can adapt the new environmental conditions manage to survive and move on.

Organizational Ecology Theory tries to clarify the mentioned evolution processes with a Darwinian perspective. According to the organizational ecology, organizations born, develop and continue their life activities within a population. Basic factors play a significant role on the vital features of organizations. Such factors are as follows;

1. Demographic Factors (Organizational size and age),
2. Ecological Factors (Population density and dynamics),
3. Environmental Factors (Institutional, technic, legal political environment).



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### Organizations' level of analysis in organizational ecology

Interactions within populations deal with the ways of organizational forms arise and become extinct. Population level deals with the following issues; establishment rate on organizations, impacts of the environment on population's bearing capacity, identification of organization size, bearing capacities and density dependence, rate and density dependence, and dynamics. Organizational level deals with demographic events and life cycles regarding the organizations.

### Population density, density dependence and population dynamics

Claims in question partially explain that organization can coexist. This results in a need to analyze the notions of population and society adhering to the Organizational Ecological Theory. Concordantly, the claims indicates need for a discussion. The discussion shall be carried out under three titles. Therefore population density and dependence, characteristic features of organizations within population and the interactions with each other will be analyzed under different titles.

### Population density and density dependence

Population density is referred with the total number of organizations in a population (Carrol and Hannan, 188; 524). The structures of organizational forms within the population, concentration level of the population and variety of resources are examples of variables influencing the population dynamics. On the other hand, some variable examples that has effects on population density are, legitimacy, homogeneity and heterogeneity of the population (Petersen and Koput, 1991), death, organizational evolution and competition.

### Demographics of the organizations

"Organizational demographics" aspect of the theory that analyzes the processes of the organizations focuses on notions such as establishing/closing organizations, changes, coalescences and disbanding. According to Hannan and Freeman (1989), prototypes prepared for both population and demographics of the organizations examine the establishment/closing rates of the organizations, existence of other populations and interactions within such populations. On the other hand, changes in the growth of populations formed by organizations, and also the organizations entrances and exits to the populations are considered to be within the organizational demographics. Specifying the rates regarding organizations play an effective role in the interpretation of characteristic features of population and societies. Such characteristics are listed as age, size, population, death and changes.

### Population of northern cyprus and road network

The island of Cyprus is located between 30.33 and 35.41 latitudes and 32.33 and 34.55 longitudes. The total area of the island is 9,251 km<sup>2</sup> and total area of the Northern part of the island is 3,242 km<sup>2</sup>. Within the years several population census surveys have been conducted and the data gathered from the years of 1978, 1996, 2006 and 2011 are 146.746, 200.587, 256.644 and 286.257 respectively (DPÖ, 2017). The latest data on population census was 320.884 conducted in 2014. According to the data gathered in 2014, the distribution by cities is as follows; 86.921 in Nicosia District, 21.338 in Famagusta District, 21.961 in Kyrenia District, 9.121 in Morphou District and 6.558 in İskele District (DPÖ, 2011).

### Northern cyprus 2014 – 2020 population projections

*Table 1: Northern Cyprus Distribution of District Populations, 2014-2020*  
(Muhtaroglu, Ö, DPÖ, 2018)

2014-2020 POPULATION PROJECTIONS	
YEAR	POPULATION
2014	320.884
2016	339.476
2017	351.965
2018	361234
2019	370.743
2020	378.673

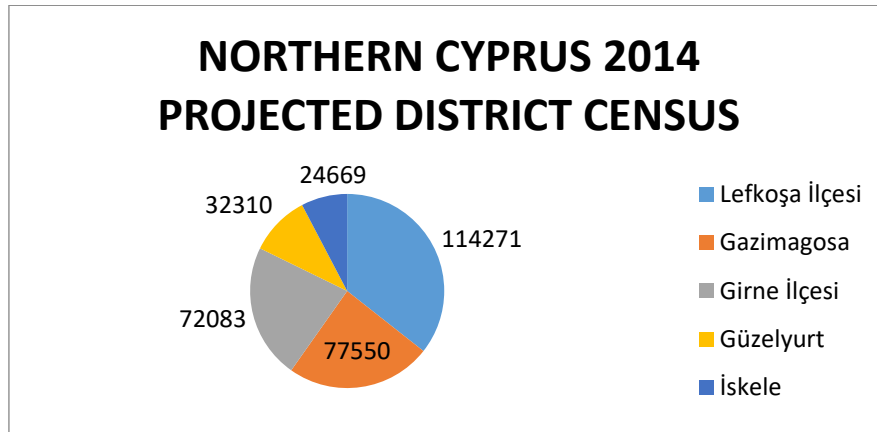


Table 2: Northern Cyprus Distribution of District Populations, 2014 Projected Census

According to data collected in 2018, total population of the Northern Cyprus is 320.884 when the number of students (approx. 92.000) studying in this part of the island is also taken into consideration. The total road network of Northern Cyprus is 2.400 km; 1.625 km of the total being useable asphalted road and 775 km non-asphalted roads (Altan,İ, 2016). By all accounts collected in June 2015, total number of vehicles in Northern Cyprus is 278.149 (Halkın Sesi Newspaper, Number of Vehicles in Northern Cyprus, 2016).

Total of 341.496 vehicles had made registrations between 1974 and 2018. Data gathered in the beginning of 2018 showed that there are 282.497 insured vehicles in Northern Cyprus. 198.185 of these vehicles are in-service (Traffic Department, 2016).

**Number of vehicles in northern cyprus**

Table 3: Number of Vehicles in Northern Cyprus

YEAR				
1974	1976	2015	2016	Beginning of 2018
619	7.192	174.000	278.149	282, 497

(Vehicle Registration Department, 2018)

**Traffic deaths in northern cyprus (2001-2017)**

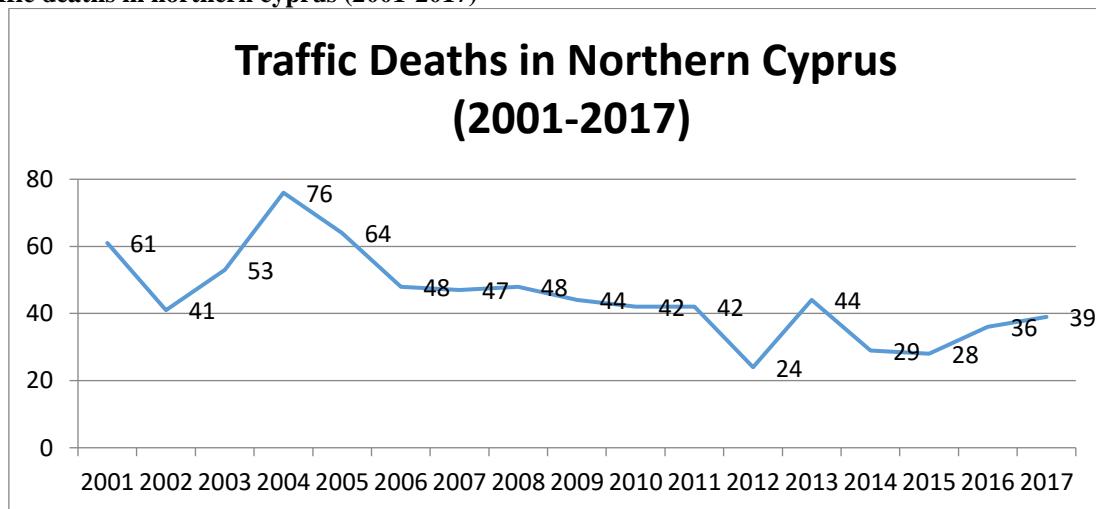


Table 4: Graph – Traffic Deaths in Northern Cyprus (2001-2017)



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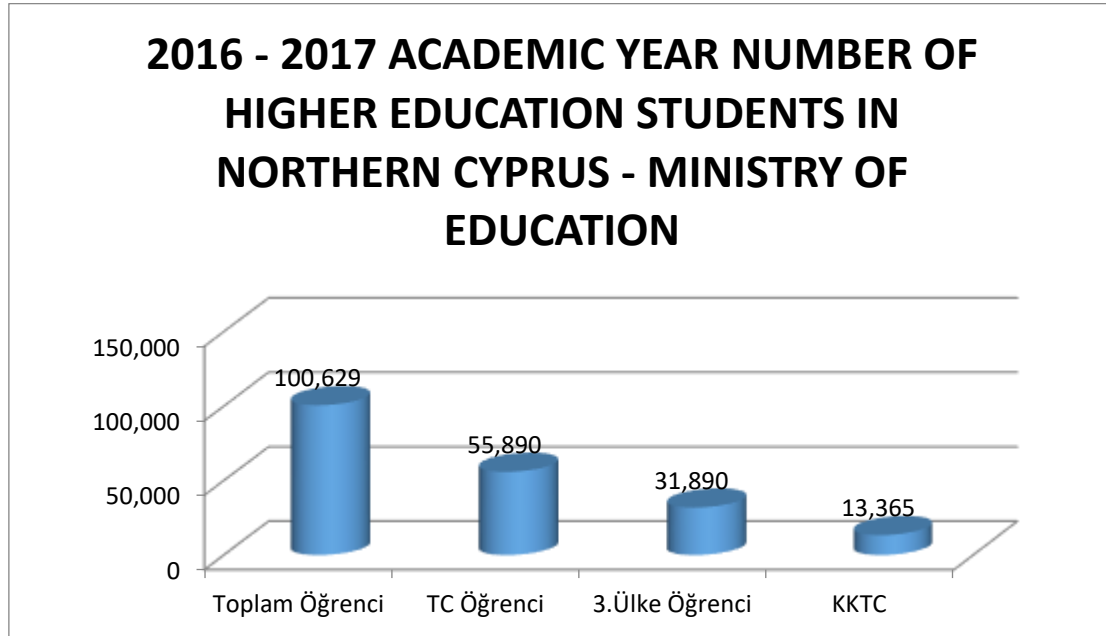
Table 5: Numbers of University Students between 2005 and 2017

SEME STER	DA Ü	YD Ü	LA Ü	GA Ü	OD TÜ	UK Ü	İT Ü	AK ÜN	G Ü	B U N	KIS BU	K.İİ im	Ul us Fi nal	KS TB	A Ö A	TOT AL
2005- 06	15. 091	10. 843	2.9 97	4.8 98	376	3.4 44										41.8 65
2006- 07	12. 545	11. 157	3.0 43	4.5 90	674	3.2 80										38.7 99
2007- 08	14. 556	15. 385	3.4 06	5.0 93	1.0 24	4.0 25										43.4 89
2008- 09	13. 980	19. 340	3.7 73	5.0 33	1.2 78	4.5 03										47.9 07
2009- 10	12. 418	16. 310	3.3 49	5.0 51	1.4 86	4.7 14										43.3 28
2010- 11	11. 835	16. 247	2.7 20	5.9 75	1.4 81	5.0 03										43.2 61
2011- 12	12. 672	16. 855	2.7 38	6.7 75	1.6 53	6.2 38	42									47.0 63
2012- 13	13. 636	20. 042	3.3 03	8.4 76	1.9 02	7.9 72	95	68								55.4 94
2013- 14	16. 054	21. 467	3.8 44	10. 751	2.1 88	7.9 36	11 2	374								62.7 26
2014- 15	19. 115	25. 068	5.4 12	13. 096	2.4 07	8.6 74	14 3	639	66 5	27 0						74.9 36
2015- 16	19. 730	27. 227	7.0 54	15. 334	2.6 37	11. 070	24 6	841	76 1	39 9	38					85.3 75
2016- 17	19. 566	26. 077	9.1 67	17. 251	2.9 18	15. 038	34 4	691	1.2 18		397	301	67	82	69	93.2 92
INCRE ASE	-0.8	-4.2	30. 0	12. 5	10. 7	35. 8	39 .8	- 17.8	60. 1	- 10 0	944. 7					9.3

(Turkish Embassy, TRNC Economy Report, 2017)



## 2016 - 2017 ACADEMIC YEAR NUMBER OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS IN NORTHERN CYPRUS - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



*Table 6: 2016 – 2017 Academic Year Number of Students in Northern Cyprus  
(Ministry of Education, October 2017)*

When the numbers of previous year is analyzed, a 10 % decrease has been observed in the number of university students compared in Northern Cyprus as of 2017. Although the number of students in 2016 was 11.925, this year's number is 10.795.

### ESTABLISHMENT RATES AND FOUNDATION DATES OF UNIVERSITIES IN NORTHERN CYPRUS

Six universities were established within 21 years from 1979 to 2000. Eight more universities were also established between 2003 and 2015.

### 2008 - 2016 reports of turkish cypriot police headquarters

*Table 7: 2008-2016 Turkish Cypriot Police Headquarters Reports*

TYPE OF CRIME	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Premeditated Murder</b>	3	4	2	2	4	3	6	3	1
<b>Fights</b>	151	176	158	140	168	173	138	121	121
<b>Prostitution</b>	34	5	27	27	22	425	21	0	1
<b>Traffic Accidents</b>	4725	3985	4399	3998	3863	4037	3827	4021	3942
<b>Drink Driving</b>	117	187	643	440	480	709	626	469	575
<b>Drugs</b>	258	249	258	288	261	245	315	277	342
<b>Sexual Harassment</b>	882	807	842	875	953	877	889	777	727

*Crimes committed within universities between 2008 and 2016*





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Table 8: 2008-2016 Turkish Cypriot Police Headquarters School-Crime Reports

TYPE OF CRIME	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Premeditated Murder	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Fights	2	4	2	0	1	4	0	3	3
Prostitution	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Traffic Accidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drink Driving	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	3	0
Drugs	1	0	1	1	1	2	2	7	10
Sexual Harassment	6	7	5	2	7	7	5	4	0

(TRNC Police Headquarters, 2017)

**A number of interviews regarding universities in northern cyprus****Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hüseyin Işıksal (Interview, December 2017)**

1. Do you think that academic staff members providing services in universities possess sufficient amount of knowledge?

I believe that significant amount of academicians in our country do not have the necessary knowledge. The non-existence of a minimum standardized criteria (such as holding a PhD degree) on employment in universities for academic staff and the patronage system allowing the institution owners/administrators to give preferential treatment, are the principal reasons. Another reason is the fact that many Cypriot students can easily obtain a PhD title as a result of again preferential treatment. In my opinion, it is beyond belief for individuals, who had never been out of Cyprus or had graduated from average universities abroad, to possess the necessary knowledge.

2. What should be Council of Higher Education criteria for Head of Departments and Deans in universities?

To my way of thinking, Head of Departments should be selected from academicians who at least possess the Associate Professorship and Deans should be selected from ones who obtain the title of Professor. For the mentioned positions, there are some crucial criteria such as age, experience, being abroad... etc. Head of Departments and Deans in Cyprus are generally chosen by either the administration or the people who have close relations with the administration. Therefore the quality and academic freedom is negatively influenced.

3. What are the admission requirements for universities? How should they be?

Students coming from Turkey, Cyprus and international countries are treated in different manners. Turkish students are accepted to Turkish Cypriot universities according their ÖSYM score, Turkish Cypriot students enter the universities own entrance exams in order to be a student of these universities and lastly, international students are accepted to the schools with varying criteria from one school to another. In fact, most of the universities in Northern Cyprus do not specify a minimum score to be registered as a student. In other words, students are able to register to the universities even though they got zero (0) from the exams administered by the universities. Although the entrance exam applied for the Turkish Cypriot student candidates seems to be the best option, it does not operate sturdily as the exams are generally too easily to evaluate or eliminate students. The foregone solution here is to increase the quality of the schools. Thus, the expected competitive environment is revived.

4. Do you approve the constant establishment of new universities in TRNC without identifying any limits?

In my opinion, it is a wrongful strategy. The uncontrolled universities established with a populist manner are quite harming the country, dropping down the quality of universities and also damaging the country's image. A "graduate" system should be applied in order to permit the new establishments and also to ensure the operation of existing universities. In addition, YÖDAK (Higher Education Planning, Accreditation and Coordination Council) and Ministry of Education based standards need to be specified and kept under one's thumb. Feasibility conditions such as Library and Sports Center should be added to the standards in addition to the quality of academic staff members.

5. What are your views on YÖDAK, which is responsible for supervising universities, and Ministry of Education?

I don't believe that YÖDAK and the Ministry of Education is sufficient. Neither of the two are independent because of their elected members. Ministry of Education is under the control of a politic party, and members of



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YÖDAK are semi-dependent. Members of YÖDAK act as representatives of their former universities and defend such universities' interests. It is known within the society that most of the YÖDAK members continue to get salaries from their universities even though the act is not ethic and legal. Such members are to return back to their universities after the termination of their YÖDAK membership. Therefore they are not accepted as independent. According to the new Rules and Regulations of YÖDAK, members should be Rector/Dean. This increase their level of dependency. A retirement condition should be applied for YÖDAK members and their return to their universities should not be allowed

6. How do the universities effectively contribute to education in Northern Cyprus?

The most effective contribution is done with good quality publications. Good quality publications are also important for the country's promotion. Moreover, the contributions of universities to the government and government organizations are significant.

7. Should a criterion (quota) be identified for the increasing numbers of students in TRNC universities? How should it be utilized?

As I mentioned earlier, a quota shall be identified and uncontrolled student flow should be prevented. The quotas should be specified according to the instructors and feasibility criteria of the universities.

### **Prof. Sadık ÜLKER (Interview, January, 2018)**

1. Do you think that academic staff members providing services in universities possess sufficient amount of knowledge?

This question should be dealt with respect to departmental basis as, even though there are many academic staff members in some departments, there is also a lack of staff in other departments. As for the matter of knowledge, it should be said that one with more research experience possess more knowledge than the other. This question is not an easily evaluable question.

2. What should be Council of Higher Education criteria for Head of Departments and Deans in universities?

YÖK has already specified such criteria. The titles of Professor and Associate Professor (if not Professor) is sought for Deans and Department Heads, respectively. In existing practice, even the Assistant Professors can act as the Head of Department in both Cyprus and Turkey.

3. What are the admission requirements for universities? How should they be?

In point of fact, the admission criteria to the universities are not elementary because there are students coming from 100 different countries and each student has a different graduation status. Therefore, in my opinion, general periodic exams (evaluating general knowledge) shall be administered.

4. Do you approve the constant establishment of new universities in TRNC without identifying any limits?

It is wrongful and a specific planning is needed.

5. What are your views on YÖDAK, which is responsible for supervising universities, and Ministry of Education?

I believe there is a need for a separate quality board independent from YÖDAK or, YÖDAK shall be strengthened. Ministry of Education do not interfere with the present situation with the universities which is not correct.

6. How do the universities effectively contribute to education in Northern Cyprus?

By realizing three aims; good quality education/teaching, research, communal contribution.

7. Should a criterion (quota) be identified for the increasing numbers of students in TRNC universities? How should it be utilized?

A growth based on planning should be applied.

### **Yödak activity report**

According to the 2017 YÖDAK activity report, there are 16 universities operating in Northern Cyprus at the moment. In addition to this number, there are 16 more universities waiting for their launch. During 2018 - 2019 academic year, YÖDAK has suspended two universities' permit to commence education for the first time. According to the YÖDAK report, it has been stated that the number of universities in Cyprus are excessive and this growth in university numbers can be dangerous. Activity report showed that there are 100,911 students, 1,255 programs and 4,529 academic staff members in Northern Cyprus. An emphasis was put on the lack of





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personnel and insufficient amount of tools in the YÖDAK report. The request is made to Prime Minister's Office for a "Higher Education Action Plan Meeting" in order to have good quality education and effectively actualize the educational policies (Ernur, E., Kıbrıs Gazetesi, 2018).

### Conclusion and suggestions

According to the data gathered from universities in Northern Cyprus, the legal regulations regarding the launch of new universities seem to be insufficient on the bearing capacity of the population. Moreover, one can easily observe the lack of institutions supervising the universities with respect to the "Organizational Ecological Theory" and/or having the universities closed off if required.

The present study suggests the updating of educational regulations of Higher Education Institutions (YÖK) in order to prevent the excessive number of increases in universities within Northern Cyprus. Moreover, an unbiased repression on the unhealthy increase of universities should be applied by the Higher Education Planning, Accreditation and Coordination Council (YÖDAK). A need to restructure the universities with respect to the criteria specified by the Higher Education Institution in Turkey is crucial. In the event of continuing to launch new universities, the fates of such universities might presumably result in failure in which they compromise on quality, efficiency and performance. The fact that institutions commodifying the matter, and also the government ignoring the problem negatively effects the education system in Northern Cyprus.

Another adverse effect of the increasing number of universities can be observed on the demographic structure, population, safety of the country and also, on the "Traffic Road Safety Network" as there are many incidences of accidents and deaths caused by accidents. According to the records between 1975 and 2018 (May), total of 1,921 people died in traffic accident. The number indicates the severity of the problem. "4E Policies" (Education/Enforcement/Emergency Services/Engineering) are to immediately applied within a program in order to ensure the "traffic safety".

Persistence of economic, political and social issues providing a ground for crime due to the increasing population in Northern Cyprus, and unemployment, economic problems, migration, discriminations of such as gender, ethnic identity and status, and lastly concerns for the future oblige people to commit crimes. Such matters play a negative role on the bearing capacity of population of Northern Cyprus which is known as a university island.

The Higher Education regulations in Northern Cyprus shall be updated and the educational levels of the university shall be raised in accordance with the international standards. In addition, a "Higher Education Policy" shall be specified with the intention of bringing the university admission criteria to the up-to-date and international level.

Prospective students with different intentions other than education, committed crimes and violations must be taken into consideration and student admission criteria shall be improved in order to preserve the quality. Attendance to classes in universities should be supervised and the ones who do not meet the identified criteria should be suspended from the universities.

A 10% downfall in the number of students in Northern Cyprus has been observed when data of 2016 and 2017 was analyzed. This might have been influenced by the success rating and criteria determined by the Higher Education Institution (YÖK). YÖK and YÖDAK needs to increase their inspections in order to ensure success in universities.

Permission to establish a new university in Northern Cyprus shall not be granted without taking the bearing capacity of the country in consideration as well as the approval of the Parliament and relevant Ministries.

Establishing an autonomous "Ministry of Higher Education", which is independent of Ministry of Education, to be responsible for universities in Northern Cyprus as well as supervising YÖDAK will significantly support both the quality and effectiveness of future universities that are planned to be established.



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Due to development of education policies , for improving narrow road networks, timely roads controls and the development of public transportation policies both will increase student satisfaction and will be reflected on the TRNC population positively. The relevant ministries (Ministry of Transport / Ministry of Education) and institutions (General Directorate of Police, Traffic Department, and Highways Department) should take responsibility for this issue.

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